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INDIA AND THAILAND ELEVATE TIES TO A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

PM Narendra Modi met his Thai counterpart on Thursday where the two countries agreed to turn their ties into a strategic partnership

ALL FOR DEVELOPMENT, NOT EXPANSIONISM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi after meeting his former Thai counterpart Thaksin Shinawatra and Thailand PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra asserted that both countries support a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based order in Indo-Pacific, and believe in a policy of development, not expansionism. Modi described the meeting as a 'delight' | **P9**

COOPERATION IN TOURISM, EDUCATION

- India emphasised cooperation in the fields of tourism, culture, and education between India's northeastern states and Thailand
- The Prime Minister will later join BIMSTEC leaders from Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan to oversee the signing of an agreement on Maritime Cooperation in the region

$16 billion

IS THE VOLUME OF BILATERAL TRADE BETWEEN INDIA, THAILAND IN 2023

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

MANIPULATION, FRAUD

SC invalidates jobs of 26K West Bengal teachers

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a major setback to the Mamata Banerjee govt, the Supreme Court on Thursday in its verdict upheld the Calcutta HC's decision to cancel 25,753 teachers appointments in West Bengal govt schools, terming the entire selection process as "vitiated by manipulation and fraud".

A two-judge bench led by the Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice P V Sanjiv Kumar refused to interfere with the Calcutta High Court's decision of April last year. The court passed the ruling on Thursday on an appeal filed by the West Bengal government against the Calcutta HC's order invalidating and cancelling the appointment of 25,753 teachers made by the state's SSC in state-run govt schools.

"We have gone through the facts. Regarding findings of this case, the entire selection process is vitiated by manipulation and fraud and credibility and legitimacy is denuded. No reason to interfere. Tainted candidates must be terminated and appointments were resultant of cheating and thus fraud," the top court said in its judgment.

In April 2024, the Calcutta HC had cancelled the appointment of 25,753 employees (both teaching and non-teaching) to state-aided schools.

India brazens out US reciprocal tariff

Sees opportunities amid challenges in Trump's 27% levy

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

INDIA may have escaped with a milder 'reciprocal' tariff but the brute force of US President Donald Trump's import levy could shake up the country's economic prospects.

Trump, in the wee hours on Thursday, announced reciprocal tariffs ranging from 10% to 49% on countries with which the US has trade deficit. He imposed a baseline tariff of 10% on all imports (effective April 5) and specific reciprocal tariffs on multiple countries (effective April 9). Some sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, copper, and energy products, will remain exempt from additional tariffs.

India has a trade surplus of $35 billion with the US and Indian goods will attract 27% tariff. While this is lower than 54% on China, 46% on Vietnam, 37% on Bangladesh, and 36% on Thailand, it is still higher than what was expected.

"We had expected 10-15% additional tariff," said Ajay Sahai, CEO, Federation of Indian Export Organisations. He said exports of seafood and carpets are among the most impacted.

Trump had initially put the tariff for India at 26%, but the White House later clarified that this would be 27%.

While in relative terms India has an edge over its Asian peers, the gains would be limited, say analysts. The additional cost of higher tariffs is likely to be passed on to consumers, leading to an increase in prices and muted demand over the medium term, triggering a slowdown.

Meanwhile, the Indian government on Thursday said it is carefully examining the implications of reciprocal tariff. The commerce ministry said it is also looking at the opportunities that may arise due to the new development. **P11,12**

MARKETS BLEED

Nasdaq	5.54%
S&P 500	4.32%
Dow Jones	3.35%
Nikkei	2.77%
Hang Seng	1.52%
Sensex	0.42%

(Early trade figures for US markets)

WHAT TO EXPECT

Analysts flag global recession fears

India's FY26 GDP growth may slip 50-100 bps from expected levels

Leopard enters Jigani house, blows daylights out of couple

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

JUST imagine a leopard walking in through the main door, into the living room, and then to the bedroom and take refuge under the bed... all while you are having your morning tea/coffee. This was the experience of a shocked elderly couple in Kuntala Reddy Layout in Jigani municipal residential area on Thursday morning.

The petrified couple, who are tenants in the house, Venkatesh and Venkatalakshmamma, ran out and locked the main door before dialing the local police and forest officials for help.

A forest official said: "Around 6.30-7am, locals sighted the leopard on the road abd threw stones at it to scare it away. The leopard ran towards the human habitation and entered the house as the gates and the door were open."

The couple staying in the 1-BHK house was seated on the sofa when the leopard walked in.

"We initially thought it was a dog. It started moving towards the bedroom. My wife wanted to scare the animal out when she saw the spotted tail and realised it was a leopard...then we ran out of the house," Venkatesh told forest department officials. **CONTINUED ON P2**

EXPRESS READ

Heavy showers in city bring respite from heat

Bengaluru: A heavy downpour brought the city the much-needed respite from the summer heat on Thursday. The rain brought down 12 trees and at least 41 branches, and resulted in waterlogging which slowed down traffic in several parts of the city. As per Met Dept data, overall the city received 4.5mm rain, but IMD's rain gauge at HAL Airport reported 38.8mm rainfall, while KIA reported 22.4mm rain. According to the Met dept, more showers are likely on Friday | **P2**

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE

38 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Heated debate on Waqf in Rajya Sabha

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE Rajya Sabha witnessed heated debate on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, hours after Lok Sabha passed it in the wee hours of Thursday.

The debate, which continued late into the night, saw participation from more than 35 members. Introducing the bill, Union minister Kiren Rijiju rejected the Opposition's claims that the legislation would infringe upon Muslim rights. He asserted that the amendments were made to make the law more inclusive, adding they aimed at improving the representation of women on the Waqf Board and protecting the rights of all Muslim sects.

However, the Opposition termed the bill "unconstitutional" and accused the government of aiming to deprive Muslims of their rights concerning Waqf properties.

Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, in his pushback, rejected the claims about the bill's benefits. "There is nothing new except the clauses that will destroy the people," he said, dismissing it as having no real welfare provisions for Muslims.

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